

Supporting Women in Construction Grants Program

*Guidelines for Funding
2026-27*

Introduction

In 2026 the construction industry continues to face longstanding challenges in attracting and retaining women, despite ongoing efforts to improve equality and diversity.

Cultural and structural barriers persist, and both unconscious and conscious bias continue to influence recruitment and retention outcomes.

Construction Skills Queensland (CSQ) invests in a range of programs and services to support the building and construction industry to develop a skilled and sustainable workforce.

For the building and construction industry, women offer a real solution to productivity and labour challenges, however attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining women in the construction industry requires systemic changes to culture and workplace practices that will require collaborative partnerships between government, industry and service providers.

Improving female participation is not only about attracting new entrants; it is equally dependent on ensuring that women working in construction feel supported, safe and able to grow their careers.

CSQ Women in Construction Strategy 2026-2029

CSQ is committed to supporting a diverse construction workforce and collaborates with industry and key stakeholders on a range of programs and services that encourage female participation in the construction sector.

Building on existing activity, CSQ's Women in Construction Strategy 2026-29 will bring together industry and stakeholders to deliver a range of programs and services that aim to increase and sustain female participation in the construction sector.

Central to the CSQ Women in Construction Strategy is a new program that will invest up to \$12 million over three years for the delivery of projects that complement CSQ's current Pathways, training and sponsorship programs.

Supporting Women in Construction Grants Program

The Supporting Women in Construction Grants Program will provide an opportunity for industry and key partners to deliver projects that will:

- **Promote construction careers** - raise awareness, shift perceptions, and highlight the value of construction careers for women
- **Support industry-led gender equity and inclusion** - improve culture, safety, and gender equity across construction workplaces.
- **Provide professional development** - support women working in construction to grow and progress into leadership and technical roles.
- **Build networks and connections** - build strong professional networks that sustain engagement and long-term retention.

All projects will contribute to the delivery of a coordinated, visible and positive narrative about construction careers - one that resonates with women of all ages and supports a stronger, more diverse future workforce.

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible to apply for funding, applicants must:

- have a Queensland base;
- have a presence in the Queensland building and construction industry;
- have traded for 2 years or more; and
- be registered for GST and have an active Australian Business Number (ABN).

Eligible organisations include:

- Industry associations
- Not-for-profit organisations and charities
- For-profit organisations with a focus on supporting women working in construction

Ineligible organisations include:

- Apprentice Connect Australia providers
- Workforce Australia providers
- Federal, state and local government agencies
- Statutory authorities and government-owned corporations

Participant eligibility

Supporting Women in Construction projects will support women who are:

- Australian or New Zealand Citizens or Permanent Residents; or an individual that has the right to work in Australia; or has a Valid Visa prescribed by CSQ
- permanent residents of Queensland
- employed in the Queensland Building and Construction Industry or interested in a construction career (eg. graduates, career seekers, career changers, women returning to the workforce).

Participant selection is at the discretion of the funded organisation. Other groups or individuals may be approved as eligible by CSQ based on a business case.

Available Funding

Eligible organisations may apply to deliver one or more of the following eligible activity streams:

- Promote Construction Careers
- Equity and Inclusion
- Professional Development
- Networking and Connections

Organisations can apply for funding between \$50,000 to \$500,000 per year.

Successful applicants will be funded for an initial term of up to 12 months and may be extended for up to a further two years, subject to first-year performance and ongoing availability of funding in future CSQ Training Plans.

On review of first-year outcomes, CSQ may also consider increases or decreases in funding levels for projects, or may identify alternative funding sources to support ongoing project delivery or implementation of project learnings/outputs.

Eligible Activities

Supporting Women in Construction projects may address up to four eligible activity streams. Examples of activities that may be supported are outlined below.

1. Promote Construction Careers

Raising awareness, shifting perceptions, and highlighting the value of construction careers for women

- Awareness campaign - social media and industry or sector-wide campaigns showcasing women in varied roles (i.e. project management, trades, engineering, design, digital construction).
- Career ambassadors - train women to deliver school presentations, attend career expos, and speak at community events.
- Showcase success stories - create short videos or written profiles featuring women's career journeys, achievements, and work-life balance stories.
- Industry partnerships - collaborate with organisations established to support women in the workforce to promote construction pathways for women.
- "Day in the Life" immersion - offer half-day or full-day site visits for high school students, university students, and career changers.
- Gender-Inclusive recruitment campaigns - review job ads for inclusive language, add female success indicators (flex options, career progression, safety culture), and use imagery representing diverse women.
- Showcase apprenticeship/traineeship opportunities and pathways.

2. Equity & Inclusion

Improving culture, safety, and gender equity across construction workplaces

- Site culture and inclusion workshops – training for leaders and crews on inclusive site behaviours, micro-aggressions, and psychological safety.
- Gender-responsive PPE and facilities – explore options for female-fit PPE, safe and clean amenities, breastfeeding/parenting facilities, and private changing spaces.
- Bias-proof recruitment – explore/implement blind resume screening, structured interviews, and gender-balanced hiring panels.
- Flexible work on construction projects – promote rostering flexibility (shared shifts, adjusted start times, hybrid roles for office tasks).
- Gender safety review - regular site reviews ensuring women's physical, cultural, and psychological safety needs are addressed.

3. Professional Development

Supporting women to grow and progress into leadership and technical roles

- Leadership accelerator – offer workshops, coaching, and leadership shadowing.
- Leadership insight and support - pair early-career women with senior leaders and provide structured guidance and support for advancement.
- Graduate programs – onboard female graduates into professional roles, explore leadership pathways, provide exposure to the construction industry.
- Career planning and promotion readiness - annual career conversations with tailored growth plans for women.
- Women in Leadership – targeted support or development sessions for sharing insights, challenges, and project learnings.

4. Networking and connections

Building strong professional networks that sustain engagement and long-term retention

- Women in Construction events – regular events featuring guest speakers, panel discussions, and project showcase tours.
- Peer Circles / Lean-in groups - small groups that meet regularly to discuss workplace challenges and professional growth.
- Allyship program - engage male allies via workshops and events to support culture change across the industry.
- Online community hub – support for digital platforms channels to share resources, opportunities, and celebrate wins.
- Cross-company mentoring – collaboration with construction companies, associations or industry peak bodies to pair women with mentors outside their direct company for broader exposure.

Ineligible Activities

The Supporting Women in Construction Program forms part of a broader three-year CSQ Women in Construction Strategy. Services already funded by CSQ through other elements of the Strategy will not be considered for funding under this program. This includes:

- Pathways initiatives – CSQ’s Construction Pathways and Pre-trade programs support students to enter trade and non-trade jobs in the construction industry through partnerships with schools and industry to deliver targeted events, activities and training.
- Skills and training – a core component of CSQ’s Training Plan that funds training providers to deliver qualifications, short courses and micro-credentials, with industry able to propose new training priorities on an ongoing basis.
- Building and Civil Contractors initiatives – training and services designed to meet the needs of major projects and their supply chain, including social inclusion and workforce initiatives.
- Support for apprentices – targeted support offered through CSQ’s Apprentice Support Program to complement mainstream support provided by the Queensland and Australian Governments.
- Sponsorship of events – CSQ runs a twice-yearly application process (April and October) to invite requests for CSQ sponsorship and partnerships.

CSQ will also not consider proposals that:

- are already funded by government or other funding bodies.
- request funding for the development of privately held physical assets or fittings.
- will not specifically benefit women working or seeking to work in the building and construction industry in Queensland.

Project costs

Organisations must submit a project budget as part of their application, clearly outlining how funding will be used to support project-related costs.

Any funding to be directed to partner organisations, including through sub-contracting arrangements, must be clearly identified in the project budget.

Any third-party contributions must also be detailed in the application to ensure all funding, resources and in-kind support are fully considered.

Ineligible Costs

Project funds cannot be used for:

- the purchase of assets or capital equipment e.g. IT equipment, buildings or vehicles
- event sponsorship and partnerships
- training or conferences for staff
- non-project related travel for staff
- nationally recognised training

Expected Outcomes

Project success will be measured against the following key performance indicators:

- Performance against contract deliverables
- Delivery of approved activities
- Commitment to activities, events and initiatives aimed at increasing female participation in the construction industry
- On time submission of compliant reports and documents as detailed in the Supporting Women in Construction Master Services Agreement and Program Schedule.

Application Process

Supporting Women in Construction applications will be considered as part of a single competitive application round in 2026-27 that will support funding allocations over the three-year program period.

To encourage a diverse range of projects throughout the state, organisations are limited to submitting one application in the 2026-27 funding round (with up to four streams of activity).

While collaborative projects are encouraged, each application must be submitted by a lead organisation that will be responsible for managing project funding and contractual obligations.

Any services to be delivered by partnering organisation must be outlined in the application, as any sub-contracting arrangements must be approved by CSQ as part of the application process.

An order of merit will be established through the application round, which may be used to support additional allocations of funding for projects across the three-year program period.

CSQ may vary or discontinue the application and assessment process at any time and may:

- apply assessment criteria and weightings as CSQ sees fit
- refuse to consider incomplete applications or assess information submitted after the funding round closing date
- determine an application ineligible for funding

Applications must be submitted to CSQ, via the agreed application process, by the published closing date. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

Key funding round dates, application process details and a list of successful applicants will be published on the CSQ Women in Construction webpage at <https://www.csq.org.au/women-in-construction/>

Application Assessment

1. Initial Eligibility Assessment

CSQ will review eligibility of organisations and undertake an initial assessment of all applications against the 'Capacity to Manage' criteria outlined below to ensure compliance with the objectives and eligibility requirements of the SWIC program.

Criteria	Considerations
Capacity to manage	- Financial viability of lead organisation - Relevant experience in managing grant funds and delivering similar activities - Established base in Queensland - Relevant relationships with industry and other key stakeholders - Project meets program guidelines

Applications that do not meet the initial eligibility assessment will be considered ineligible to proceed for further assessment.

2. Full Assessment

All eligible applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

Criteria	Considerations
Industry Need	- Impact project will have on advancing equity, inclusion and culture change in the Queensland building and construction industry - Demonstrated links to industry, local employers and key stakeholders - Evidence of benefit to women
Strategies to Assist Participants	- Tailored recruitment strategies to support target group/s - Project reach – number of women to be engaged, accessibility - How proposed activities will support women in construction - Support mechanisms to address individual goals - Specialised assistance or links with other support agencies
Outcomes	- Career promotion and pathway exploration - Benefits from proposed activities i.e. clear opportunities - Commitment to activities, events and initiatives aimed at increasing female participation - Support from local employers and industry to facilitate workplace change and ongoing support for women.
Value for Money	- Cost effectiveness - cost of proposed activities - No duplication with other services or agencies - Proportion of funding going to delivery of activities - Co funding or in-kind contributions from industry or other sources - Funding justification

Funding Conditions

Successful applicants that are not currently funded by CSQ must complete an onboarding process and enter into a formal Master Services Agreement with CSQ, which outlines the standard funding terms for all suppliers.

All successful applicants must execute a Program Schedule that outlines the specific services and performance requirements for program funding.

Any approved sub-contracting arrangements will also be outlined in the Program Schedule.

Quarterly progress reports must be submitted for the duration of the project, with a Final Report due within 10 business days after the project end date summarising outcomes, successes, and key learnings.

Performance meetings will be held with suppliers throughout the contract period, with a final meeting at project completion to support project evaluation.

Supporting Women in Construction Program Guidelines may be updated to reflect future changes, with current guidelines published on the CSQ website.

Payments

Payment of Funding made by CSQ to contracted organisations will be:

- 25% of the Maximum Funding Amount paid 10 Business Days after the execution of an Agreement.
- 25% of the Maximum Funding Amount on receipt and validation of the first Report.
- 25% of the Maximum Funding Amount on receipt and validation of the second Report.
- 25% of the Maximum Funding Amount on receipt and validation of the third Report.

Payments will not be processed if:

- Reports are not received as outlined in the Program Schedule, and/or
- The contracted organisation fails to deliver the services in accordance with the Master Services Agreement and Program Schedule.

Program Evaluation

Funded organisations will be required to participate in a review during the first year of project delivery, and in any subsequent reviews undertaken throughout the life of the funded project.

As part of these reviews, CSQ will evaluate performance against contract requirements and Key Performance Indicators, as well as project learnings, outcomes and ongoing need.

Review findings will determine the ongoing viability of the project, subject to the availability of funding under CSQ's Training Plan.

CSQ will also undertake an evaluation of the broader Women in Construction Strategy, including the Supporting Women in Construction Grants Program, to identify the impact of CSQ's programs and services on female participation in the Queensland construction industry, and to inform priorities beyond 2029.